

Historic Naval and Military Establishments



HOURS: Open daily 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Victoria Day weekend in May to Labour Day Group Tours by reservation only. Picnic and docking facilities.

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RATES: Adults .75¢, students .50¢, children .25¢ family maximum \$2.00. Rates subject to change.



Ministry of
Culture and
Recreation

Hon. Reuben C. Baetz
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Deputy Minister

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Discover



Historic Naval and Military Establishments (1817-1856)

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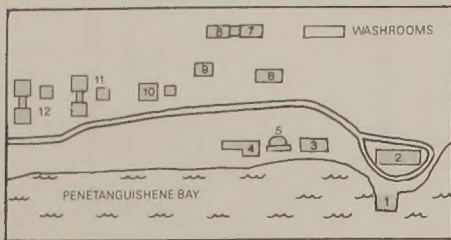
Penetanguishene, Ontario



The Naval and Military Establishments today is a living historical community consisting of offices, homes, workshops, barracks, as well as the original stone officers' quarters. An exciting era of Canadian history comes alive, as you explore the impressive naval storehouse,

chat with a sailor, admire the collection of period antiques or watch the regimental soldiers demonstrate parade drills and musketry. Here at the Establishments, you are invited to experience part of our heritage.





NAVAL ESTABLISHMENT (1817-1834)

When the War of 1812-14 erupted with the United States, Britain rushed to protect her Canadian colonial boundaries, establishing a line of defense along the Great Lakes. The natural harbour on Penetanguishene Bay was considered an ideal location for an active naval base, but little had been done before the war ended.

Precarious Peace

The uneasy state of peace meant that naval bases along the Upper Lakes were still needed, but instead of constructing warships, the emphasis shifted to one of supply and ship maintenance. Britain, however, was determined to maintain her naval strength by keeping vessels in a state of readiness at Penetanguishene.

Peak of Activity


The next five years were the peak period of activity at the base. An immense storehouse was erected, along with offices, workshops, barracks and homes. This ambitious building programme, combined with naval surveys, ship repair and daily chores, kept more than 70 men busy at the Establishment.


Meanwhile, ships plying the Upper Lakes arrived at the Establishment to unload supplies . . . food, clothing, tools, rope, ships' equipment . . . all of which were safely tucked away in the storehouse. A small contingent of British soldiers was posted there to ensure the security of the storehouse contents.


The Royal Navy brought to the isolated outpost a complex system of technology and bureaucracy. Exacting standards of routine and discipline were the key to maintaining this strategic naval base in the Canadian wilderness.


Naval Reductions


Improved Anglo-American relations and increased costs of maintaining naval bases throughout the Empire, led to successive reductions of forces on the Great Lakes. In 1834, the Navy shipped out of Penetanguishene and the base was transferred to the British military.


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1. King's Wharf
Loading and unloading of supplies and equipment from vessels took place at the wharf.
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2. Naval Storehouse
This imposing structure safeguarded vast quantities of provisions and naval equipment.
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3. Sawpit
Under this shelter, sawyers hand cut all wood-en planking for the Naval Establishment.
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4. Blacksmith Shop
In his shop the smith produced the metal hardware and fittings required for buildings and ship repair.
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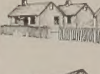
5. Steam Kiln
The kiln was a makeshift device for shaping wooden planks used in ship repair.
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6. Quartermaster's Cabin
The combination workshop and office reveals the activities of the head shipwright.
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7. Seamen's Barracks
A seaman's off-duty hours were spent in these simply furnished on-shore quarters.
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8. Assistant Surgeon's House
The surgeon's simple home illustrates his position and function in the Establishment.
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9. Office of the Clerk-in-Charge
The bureaucratic operation of the dockyard was centered in this small office.
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10. House of the Clerk-in-Charge
A bachelor's tastes and interests are reflected in the living quarters of the naval clerk.
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11. Commanding Officer's House
Social class and senior position are reflected in the refined home of the commanding officer.
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12. House of the Naval Surveyor
This building was the seasonal headquarters for Lieutenant Bayfield and his assistant.

MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT

(1828-1856)

Though a small military guard had been posted to the Royal Navy base at Penetanguishene in 1817, it was not until 1828 that a permanent army garrison was established there.

Under a boundary agreement, Drummond Island near present-day Sault Ste. Marie was turned over to the Americans and the British military decided to move the island garrison to Penetanguishene. Peace was still uneasy between Britain and the United States, and Penetanguishene now became a strategic location for a military installation, vital to the protection and maintenance of important lines of communications and supply.

Financial Restrictions

Grand plans for a military fort at Penetanguishene were drawn up but financial pressures in Britain limited construction at the new post to two stone buildings and a few log structures. Old naval buildings on the site had to be repaired and renovated for use by the army.


The focus of military activity was in the area surrounding the soldiers' barracks and the Officers' Quarters. In spite of the isolation and problems of supply which continued to affect life on Penetanguishene Bay, the usual garrison procedures, such as battle and musketry drill, kept the regiments in a state of armed readiness.


Influenced Growth of Area


Some soldiers brought their families with them to Penetanguishene and a domestic dimension was added to military life. It had a substantial influence on the social and economic developments of the community. Canadian voyageurs, previously in residence at Drummond Island, elected to stay under British rule and moved with the garrison to Penetanguishene. St. James-on-the-Lines Church was built mid-way between the Establishment and the town, where it stands today. The Penetanguishene Road, now part of Highway 27, was cut through from York (Toronto), greatly improving transportation and communications.

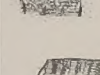
End of an Era


Over the years, growing affinity with the United States diminished the military significance of the post. Continued political pressure in Britain to reduce military forces abroad eventually led to withdrawal of regular troops from Penetanguishene. In 1856 the base was closed down completely and the land was turned over to the Government of Upper Canada. A mere eleven years later Canada would become an independent nation.





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13. Keating House
A warm and friendly atmosphere characterizes the family home of the garrison's Fort Adjutant, who acted as chief administrator for the military establishment.
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14. Garden
Abundant crops depict the necessity for adequate supply at a remote army post.
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15. Fuel Yard
Secure storage of fuel wood in large quantities was an essential aspect of garrison operations.
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16. Officers' Quarters
The restored residence of senior military personnel recalls British colonial influence and responsibilities.
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17. Cannon
Two iron cannon symbolize the state of armed readiness maintained at the Penetanguishene garrison.
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18. Orientation Centre
Houses a theatre, lobby and sales area.